

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

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Apparatus for cutting an indefinite length suture to different lengths for subsequent threading and swaging to surgical needles includes a drawing tower having first and second guide members defining a drawing axis parallel thereto. First and second grippers are provided to grip the indefinite length suture and to alternately draw it along the drawing axis, with each gripper being mounted for reciprocal movement along a guide member. Each gripper alternately grips the suture and draws it a distance beyond the location of a cutter assembly while the other gripper reciprocates to a start position before the cutter assembly. A tipping assembly heats a predetermined small length of the suture to stiffen the suture thereat after subsequent cooling, in preparation for cutting the suture thereat and inserting a stiffened lead cut end of the suture into an end of a needle for swaging thereto. Both the tipping assembly and the cutter assembly are variably positioned in the apparatus to accommodate different cut lengths of suture. A long length of suture travel is provided between the tipping assembly and the cutter assembly which is a discrete number of apparatus cutting cycles between the tipping and cutting operations to allow the tipped suture to cool prior to cutting.